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Affize-Sermon,
Preach'd at
KINGSTON.

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Dr. GABRIEL W.'s

Autobiography

By

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RELIGION, *the best Security to* CHURCH
and STATE.

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S E R M O N

Preach'd at the

A S S I Z E S

Held at *KINGSTON* in *SURREY*,
March the 10th 17¹⁴₁₅,

Before the Right Honourable the

LORD Chief-Justice *PARKER*,

A N D

Mr. JUSTICE *TRACY*.

By EDM. GIBSON, D. D. *Archdeacon of Surrey*,
and Chaplain in Ordinary to His MAJESTY.

Published at the Request of the High-Sheriff, Grand Jury,
and other Gentlemen.

LONDON: Printed for *J. Churchill*, at the *Black Swan*
in *Pater-Noster-Row*. 1715.

RELIGION, the best Security to CHURCH
and STATE.

SERMON

Preach'd at the

ASSIZES

Held at KINGSTON in SURREY,

March the 10th 1711.

Before the Right Honourable the

Lord Chief Justice PARKER.

AND

Mr Justice TRACY.

By Edm. Gosson, D. D. Archbishop of Suess,
and Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

LONDON: Printed by J. Sturges, at the High-Street, Great-Door,
near St. Dunstons Church.

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JEREMIAH vii. 3, 4.

3. *Thus saith the Lord of Hosts the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this Place.*
4. *Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, are these.*

IT appears by the History of the *Jewish* Nation, and particularly by the Language of their Prophets and the Tenor of their several Messages from God, that they had fal'n by Degrees into a shameful Neglect of the Moral Law; which God had deliver'd to their Fathers, by the Hand of *Moses*, for a Rule of Life to them and their Posterity. And because they were the peculiar People of God, and in Covenant with him, and knew that Obedience on their part was a Condition absolutely necessary to secure his Favour and Protection; the more they fail'd in the inward Obedience of the Heart, and in the Duties

Duties of Moral Goodness and Righteousness, the greater Zeal they show'd for the outward and Ritual Parts of the Law. Particularly, they rested much in their Zeal for the *Temple*; and it should seem by the Text, which forbids them to trust in *lying Words*, that there wanted not false Prophets, who had taught them that their Zeal for the Temple would go a great way to atone with God for all Failings in other Parts of their Duty. A Lesson, that is readily learn'd and embrac'd by corrupt Nature; which desires nothing more, than to compound with God for Defects in inward Goodness, by an Excess of Zeal for external Performances of any kind. But the Prophet in the Text deals clearly with them; and, without *blaming* their Zeal for the Honour of the Temple, tells them in plain Terms, that they who had possess'd them with a Belief that that alone would recommend them to the Favour of God, were lying Prophets; and assures them from the Mouth of God himself, That nothing but the Amendment of their Ways, and the Practice of the Substantial Duties of Religion, could procure to them and their Posterity, a lasting Establishment in the Land wherein they dwell. *Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, &c.*

From

From the Words, I will take Occasion to discourse of these Three Heads ;

I. *First*, That Religion, and the general Practice of it in a Nation, is the surest Establishment of States and Kingdoms.

II. *Secondly*, That therefore, in every Nation, it is the proper Business of the Civil Magistrate, as such, to vindicate and maintain the Honour of Religion.

III. *Thirdly*. That without a serious Regard to the Moral and Spiritual Duties of Religion, the greatest Zeal in other Matters, even tho' it be for the establish'd Worship of God, will not secure the Divine Favour and Protection, either to Persons or Nations.

First then, I am to show, That Religion, and the general Practice of it in a Nation, is the surest Establishment of States and Kingdoms.

And this is a certain Truth, whether we consider it in a Natural or a Supernatural Way.

That Religion is the surest Establishment of States and Kingdoms, is true in a Natural Way ; because the Duties of Religion have a natural tendency to those Things which are the Foundations
of

of that Establishment, *viz.* Peace, and Unity, and Order. These are the certain Effects of Moral Duties: Of Meekness and Gentleness, of Patience and Charity, and Forbearance; as these prevent Quarrels and Contentions, and unite the Hearts and Affections of Men, and engage them in the pursuit of the same Interest, and in the Defence of the same common Cause: Of the strict Administration of Justice; which makes Men secure in the Enjoyment of their Legal Rights; and the finding themselves easy in their present Condition, determines them to be resolute in the Maintenance of that Establishment, to which they owe their Ease and Security: Of Diligence in the several Callings and Professions wherein the Divine Providence hath placed Mankind; by which every Hand is perpetually contributing to the National Strength: And *lastly*, they are the Effects of Sobriety, Temperance, and Contentment; which bring the Necessities of Nature into a narrow Compass, and dispose Men to a quiet and comfortable Enjoyment of what God sends, without molesting or envying their Neighbours.

These and the like Advantages to Society, are the natural Effects of Religious Duties. Nor does Religion only prescribe the Duties, but it enforces the Practice of them, far beyond what any human Power can do. It ties them fast upon the
Minds

Minds and Consciences of Men, by a Reverence to the all-seeing Eye of God, and a Belief of Rewards and Punishments in the next World ; and these are effectual Obligations to Duty, in innumerable Cases which human Eyes cannot reach ; and being so, give Mankind a mutual Security and a full Confidence in one another ; which is the strongest Bond of Human Society.

For the further illustration of this Truth, That Religion, and the general Practice of it in a Nation, is the surest Establishment of States and Kingdoms ; let us suppose the quite contrary, that Vice and Wickedness were the general Practice ; that a Nation lived in a State of Anger and Malice and Revenge, in Injustice and Rapine, in Sloth and Luxury, in Envy, Murmuring, and Discontent : What Confusions and Distractions would these breed ! And how easie a Prey would such a People become to their Enemies, or rather how quickly would they devour and destroy themselves ! And, considering the great Corruption of human Nature, and to what Degrees that Corruption works, and oft-times breaks out in Acts of Injustice and Violence and Revenge, notwithstanding all that human Power can do to prevent them ; the only sure Foundation of Order and Government, is Religion, which moulds the Minds of Men into

a quiet and peaceable Frame, and by perpetually presenting to their View an all-seeing Providence and a future Judgment, not only leaves no Place to hope for Impunity, but makes the Obligations to Duty of equal Strength, at all times, and in all places. An Honour, which even the *Atheists* themselves do in effect grant to Religion ; inasmuch as nothing can give Colour to their Suggestion, ' That it is an Invention of Politick Men to keep the World in Order,' but that the Ties and Restraints which it lays upon Mankind, are in their Nature and Effects a singular Advantage to Society and Government.

But besides a natural Tendency in Virtue and Goodness to the Establishment of States and Kingdoms ; as many as believe Religion, must likewise believe, that the general Practice of it in a Nation will be always attended with a Supernatural Blessing from God. For this is the Result of all the Declarations of God, as to the Manner and Rule of his Dealings with Mankind, whether Persons or Nations, That as many as faithfully serve and obey him, shall be assuredly intitled to his Favour and Protection. But in the dispensing of *Temporal* Prosperity, and the Degrees of Assurance that Virtue and Goodness shall receive their Reward *in this World* ; there is a great Difference between the Case of particular

lar Persons, and the Case of whole Nations. As to particular Persons, we see that Poverty and Afflictions are oft-times the Portion of religious and good Men in their passage through this World, while many wicked Men are suffered to live and die in Power and Plenty. And the Reason is, because both are capable of *future* Rewards and Punishments, and for that End are accountable to God in the next World ; where the Divine Justice will manifest it self in the Reward of the Righteous, and the Punishment of the Wicked. But Nations as such, which are united and incorporated for the Ends and Purposes of this World only, are to have no *Being* in the next ; and since they are incapable of *future* Rewards, it follows, That National Virtue must either be rewarded with National Blessings now, or not be rewarded at all ; and if the Supposition of no Reward is inconsistent with the Divine Justice, the Consequence will be, That a general Practice of Virtue and Goodness, intitles a Nation to such *Temporal Blessings*, as may most conduce to the Strength, Prosperity and Establishment of the whole.

Having thus far shown, how greatly Religion, and the Practice of it, contributes to the Establishment of States and Kingdoms ; I will now proceed to the Second General Head ;

II. That therefore, in every Nation, it is the proper Business of the Civil Magistrates, as such, to vindicate and maintain the Honour of Religion. And throughout this Head, by the Civil Magistrates will be chiefly meant the Subordinate Ministers of Justice under the Prince, with Regard to the several Districts which their Influence more immediately reaches. There they are placed, with due Authority, for the great Ends of Peace and Order; and we have already shown, That these cannot be preserved, nor by Consequence the Design of their Institution answered, without a just Reverence of Religion on the Minds of the People. From whence it follows, That the Honour of Religion is not only a Part of the Magistrate's Care, but a fundamental Part; without which it is impossible to attain the great Ends of the Institution, and which being first taken care of, prevents much of the Evil, and renders the Execution of the Office, where there is need, easie and successful. And therefore in all Ages and Nations, it has been a constant Rule with the wisest Law-givers, whether Heathen or Christian, to make the Honour of *Religion* their first Care; that, wherewith the Civil Magistrate was more especially charged, and for the Violation whereof, the severest Penalties were always provided. But

But in a Christian Country, every *Civil* Magistrate is obliged to consider himself also as a *Christian* Magistrate; as one, who has not only received a Commission from the Prince, to maintain Peace and Order in the State; but who has also, thro' the Hands of the Prince, received a Commission from God, to maintain the Honour of his Religion upon Earth. It was foretold by the Evangelical Prophet *Isaiah*, what great Comfort and Support Religion should receive from Christian Princes in the Times of the Gospel, *Kings shall be thy nursing Fathers, and Queens thy nursing Mothers*: And the Apostle *Rom. xiii.* calls them the *Ministers of God*; and tells *3, 4.* us, That the End of his vesting that Power in them, is, *for the terror of evil doers, and the praise of them that do well.* And indeed, since Civil Power and Authority is from GOD, it would seem strange, if that Authority were to be exerted only in punishing the Breach of human Laws for the Safety of Men, and were not to concern it self in vindicating the Divine Laws, for the Honour and Glory of Almighty God. It is the Duty of every Christian, in the most private Station, to discountenance Vice and Wickedness to the utmost of his Power: It is further the Duty of the Ministers of the Gospel, to Exhort, Reprove, and Admonish, as being an Order of Men, instituted

tuted by Christ for those Ends : But when the best Endeavours of pious Christians and painful Ministers, cannot keep Irreligion and Profaneness from appearing barefaced in Defiance of the Divine Laws (as God knows, in this degenerate Age and Nation, it is too plain they cannot) then the Cause of God and Religion implores the Aid of the Civil Magistrate, and calls upon him to be a Terror to those notorious Workers of Iniquity, who having harden'd themselves against the gentler Methods of Instruction and Reproof, are going on, openly and resolutely, in Swearing, Drunkenness, Uncleanneſs, Profanation of the Lord's Day, and in the like wicked and ungodly Practices, without any Restraint of Shame or Conscience.

And as Religion implores the Aid of the Prince, so the Prince commands the Aid of the Subordinate Ministers of Justice, who are his Eyes and Ears within their ſeveral Diſtricts; and, being appointed his Watchmen, are obliged by the nature of their Office to great Vigilance in the Work committed to their Care. And for a further Argument to Vigilance and Resolution in that Work; it is to be remember'd, That the Power which they have received, as it is in the Civil Senſe a Commission from their Prince, ſo is it alſo in the Chriſtian Senſe a Talent from God, to be diligently

gently improved to his Glory and the Good of Mankind; and if they neglect to improve it to those great Ends, they stand accountable to God for the Abuse of his Talent, and to the Nation, for the Judgments which may fall upon it thro' their Neglect and Connivence.

And when I am speaking of Authority, and the vigorous Application thereof by the Magistrate, I cannot omit one Thing, which is a mighty Enforcement of it, I had almost said, which will supersede it, and render the Exercise of it in great Measure needless, *viz.* a *Good Example*; which in its Nature is the most forcible Way of teaching and correcting, and without which, neither the Instructions of Ministers, nor the Authority of Magistrates, can avail, to the effectual Discouragement and Suppression of Vice. They who are made the Publick Ministers of Justice, are generally Persons of Figure and Distinction: Their own Families usually numerous, their Dependents much more so, and the Extent of their Influence still larger. All these Eyes are turned upon them and their Behaviour; and the Minds of all, as they are Inferiors, stand naturally bent to the Imitation of those their Superiors. So that a Magistrate, who is sober and exemplary in his own Life, and maintains Christian Order and Regularity in his own Family,
and,

and, above all, who gives a Publick Testimony of his Zeal for Religion, in a devout Attendance on the Worship of God ; To such an one may well be applied what our Saviour says of *John the Baptist*, That he is a *burning and shining Light among his Neighbours* ; and it may be truly said of him, that he fulfils that great Precept of our blessed Saviour (which, tho' a standing Rule to Christians in general, ought more especially to be remember'd by Persons in Authority) *Let your Light so shine before Men, that they may see your good Works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.*

I pass on to the *Third* and last General Head,

III. That without a serious Regard to the Moral and Spiritual Duties of Religion, the greatest Zeal in other Matters, even though it be for the established Worship of God, will not secure the Divine Favour and Protection, either to Persons or Nations.

The External Rites of Religion are good Helps to Devotion, and proper Means of maintaining Order and Decency in the Publick Worship ; and a Zeal to preserve them with a serious Regard to those pious and wise Ends, is very laudable : But to believe that Zeal for *them* will atone for a Neglect of the Moral and Spiritual

tual Duties of Religion, is an Error very dangerous to the Souls of Men.

Under the Name of *Moral* Duties, I comprehend all those which Natural as well as Reveal'd Religion has taught us, with regard to God, our Neighbour, and our Selves. Such are, with regard to God, Love, and Fear, and Honour; an humble Trust in his Goodness, and a patient Submission to his Will in all Things: With regard to our Neighbour, Truth and Justice, Mercy and Charity; And with regard to our Selves, Meekness and Humility, Sobriety, Temperance and Chastity; Diligence in our Calling, and Contentment in our Condition. By *Spiritual* Duties, I mean those which are more immediately performed by the Heart or Spirit, and the Exercise whereof has a direct Tendency to raise our Souls to a spiritual and heavenly Frame; such are, Meditation and Devotion, Examination of our Lives, Repentance for our Sins, and the like. These Duties, the Moral as generally founded in the Nature of God, and the Spiritual as immediately tending to make Man like to God, are the Life and Soul of Religion; and as on one hand (in the Words of the Apostle on a like Occasion) *he that in these Things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God*; so on the other hand, it is in vain to hope, that without these the greatest

Rom. xiv. 18.

Zeal about the External Parts of Religion will be accepted of him.

But however agreeable those Duties are to Reason and Religion, they are by no means agreeable to the Lusts, and Passions, and corrupt Inclinations of Men; who, when they are conscious of great Neglects in the substantial Parts of Religion, and find no Disposition in themselves to secure the Favour of God that way; are willing to come up to some *Show of Religion*, that is less disagreeable to corrupt Nature, and to atone for the want of inward Piety and Goodness, by a strict Care and an immoderate Zeal about outward Performances. The *Jews* were exceeding punctual in Sacrifices and Solemn Fasts, in Washings, and other legal Ordinances; and had fully persuaded themselves, that these were the Things which God delighted in, far more than in Justice, Mercy and Truth. In like manner, the *Papists*, to obtain Pardon and Indulgence for their Sins, will readily submit to Pilgrimages, Corporal Penances, and Pecuniary Mulcts, or any thing but true Repentance and Amendment. And they have among them one Article of this outward kind of Merit, which is not only like that of the *Jews*, but exactly the same; I mean, Zeal for the Honour of the Temple, and the Church. It appears

appears by the Text, that when the Prophet denounced Judgments against the *Jews* for their Sins, they alledged their Relation to the Temple, and their Zeal for it, as a full Proof that God could not be angry with them ; and the Reason why the *Temple of the Lord* is thrice repeated in the Text, is not, as some Interpreters have fancied, because it consisted of three Parts, or because they repaired to it three times in the Year; but evidently this, that the Cry of the *Temple* was loud and frequent among them, and their Zeal for it so meritorious in their Account, as to be a full Atonement for those Neglects which the Prophets charged upon them with regard to the Moral Duties of Religion. And as to the *Papists*, it is well known, that there are no Impieties or Villanies so great, but what are excused, and even sanctified among them, if they have been committed in the Service of the Church ; and Vice and Immorality is pardon'd there, far more easily than the least Opposition to what they call the Catholick Cause.

I am sorry to say it, but it is too visible to be denied or concealed, that this Piece of *Popery*, among others, is flowing in upon us ; while the Name of the CHURCH is lent to a Party in the State, and all Persons without Distinction are listed under it, and the most profane and vicious

amongst us are not only admitted, but even invited and press'd, to wear the Name. And while the Superiours set so high a Value upon those good Wishes and Services to what they call the Cause of the Church ; the Inferiours are easily led to believe, that such a distinguished Zeal for the Church, being so much magnify'd by Persons so much more knowing than themselves, must have Merit enough in it, to atone with God for many Failings and Defects in other Parts of their Behaviour. The hopes of which, and the Strefs they lay upon it, with the Ease it gives to the Minds of Sinners, may probably be one Reason, why the Name of the CHURCH is most in the Mouths of such Persons, in the midst of their Riots and Excesses. And considering how desirous wicked Men are, to shelter themselves from Shame and Remorse by any Pretences and Colours of Religion, and what Multitudes there are who stand in need of such Shelter ; it was certainly good Policy in those Statesmen, who first betray'd the Name of the Church into a Secular Cry. And, in Truth, as it is managed among us, one would think it had been copied from that known Practice in the Times of Popery, of setting up a Standard for the Wars of the Holy Land, with Plenary Indulgences of Sins, to all those who would engage in that
meri-

meritorious Work. But however the Belief and Opinion of such Merit may serve the Purposes of Political Persons ; it is an Opinion very destructive to Religious Purposes and the Souls of Men ; and, being also a growing Opinion, the ill Effects and Consequences of it ought to be diligently guarded against both by Ministers and Magistrates : By Ministers, in frequent Warnings to the People not to build their hopes of Salvation upon such a weak Bottom, which, without substantial Piety and Goodness, will not support them in the Day of Tryal ; and by Magistrates, in an impartial Execution of the Laws against Vice, and not suffering this Political Merit towards Men, to atone in any Case for Profaneness and Immorality against God.

The CHURCH is a very sacred Name ; whether we mean by it the Catholick Church, *i. e.* the Congregation of the Faithful upon Earth under CHRIST their Head ; or this National Church, as one sound Member of the Church Catholick, established among us in an orderly Government, Discipline and Worship : And which soever we mean, it should seem to be a strange *Christian* Church, where Religion is not the first and most necessary Ingredient in the Character of a Church-man. And as it is true in Nature, that nothing that is Sacred, ought to

to be prostituted to vulgar and common Use; so is it also true in Experience, that the prostitution of the *Names* of Things, derives an unavoidable Reproach and Contempt upon the *Things* themselves.

For Instance, in the Case before us (the Name of the Church, as it has been used and applied of late Days;) Is it the way to maintain the Reverence which belongs to the Church, to give up the Name to be the publick Cry of a Division in the State, and to be toss'd about by the worst of Men, in the worst Part of their Conversation, in the midst of Swearing, and Revelling, and Drunkenness? Is it any Credit to a National Church, that those Men are most furious in her Service, who by all the Rules of the Catholick Church ought to be banished out of her Communion? Can it be for the Honour of the Church of *England* (which makes Duty and Decency to Authority, her distinguishing Mark) that Riot and Tumult and Sedition are acted under her Name? Is it for the Service of the Church, with regard to the Favour and Protection which She receives and expects from the Civil Power, that her Name be given up to the Management of those, who will not own the Church to be safe, till the State is well nigh undone, and *Popery* at our Doors? In fine, what Idea must all sober and serious Christians

istians have of the Church, when they are taught by their Leaders to acknowledge and respect those as its greatest Patriots, whom they seldom or never see within the Church ; and by the same Leaders, are taught to treat those as Enemies to the Church, whom they not only know to be unblameable and exemplary in their Lives, but whom their own Eyes see to be constant and serious in the publick Service of the Church ?

These and the like Reproaches are unavoidably brought upon the Church, by making that sacred Name an Engine for cunning Statesmen to work with ; which being once put into their Hands, makes them in Effect a *Center of Unity*, if not to the Church, at least to the Name of it ; and Persons are admitted or excluded, not according to the true ancient Tests of good Churchmen, namely, a good Life, with Conformity to the establish'd Government and Worship ; but with Allowance to Men to live as they please, and to see the Church as seldom as they desire, provided they be strictly Conformable to such Measures as will support the Interest and Ambition of their Leaders. And because very great Numbers of wise and good Men, of all Ranks and Orders, have found themselves obliged to oppose those Measures, as
tend-

ing in their Opinion to the Destruction of Church and State ; for this Reason alone, without the least Defect in Point of Conformity, they have been Unchurch'd, and many of them unworthily aspers'd and persecuted as Betrayers of the Church, who have long been, and blessed be God still continue, the greatest Ornaments of it.

There is indeed another Reason pretended and alledg'd ; namely, That they, and the Protestant Dissenters, are in the same common Measures in the State : Which is a popular Argument, and serves to amuse the Vulgar ; but, I doubt, they who alledge it, will not allow us, in our Turns, to call them *Papists*, or Favourers of *Popery* and the *Pretender* ; because the *Papists*, *Nonjurors*, and Disaffected of all Sorts, are most zealous Advocates for them and their Measures ; and (to show the Sincerity of their Zeal) have ventured to act in their Favour, with far greater Openness than our Constitution allows. For, in truth, the Argument, tho' as strong to the full in one Case as the other, is not conclusive either Way ; because a Community of Measures may be either Criminal or Innocent, according to the Degrees of the Union, and the Designs and Views with which the Parties unite. And when these are duly attended to, it will be own'd by all, who
will

will own that Popery and Arbitrary Government are the heaviest Judgments which can befall us, that this Conjunction with Protestant Dissenters in the State, which is made the Foundation of Disaffection to the Church, has not only been innocent, but highly laudable, and even necessary to the Preservation both of Church and State.

The Restoration of the Royal Family, which happily fix'd us upon our ancient Foundations in Church and State, might have been a much greater Blessing to these Nations, had they all return'd with the same Protestant Principles, in which they had been carefully educated by their pious Father. But under the Influence of a *Popish* Mother, and the Example and Persuasions of a *Popish* Nation, two of our Princes were perverted in their Religion Abroad, and came over (as hath since very plainly appear'd) with a Design and Resolution to establish Popery in these Kingdoms. To this End, they enter'd into the strictest Confidence with Princes of the same Religion; aggrandiz'd the French Monarch, who was the great Pillar of the *Popish* Cause; supported him in distressing the Dutch, the great Strength of the Protestant Interest; and, to balance their Naval Power, lent the utmost Assistance to make him

as formidable at Sea as he was before at Land. At Home, they corrupted the Morals of the Nation (which is one great preparation to Popery,) discarded a Protestant Ministry, whom they found untractable to Popish Measures; advanced those to the highest Posts of Trust and Honour, who afterwards dy'd profess'd Papists; and in general, were as openly indulgent to the Papists and the Favourers of Popery, as was consistent with the great Aversion of the Kingdom to that Religion.

In this View of Affairs both at Home and Abroad, the Design appear'd to be no less than the extirpation of the Protestant Interest and Religion in Europe. And this was early observ'd by great Numbers of wise Men, who were true Patriots of their Country, and entire Friends to Monarchy and the Church of England, as the Laws had establish'd them: but being under the unhappy Necessity of opposing the Measures of that Court, they were quickly branded with the Name of a *Republican* and *Antimonarchical* Party; and, being assisted by the Protestant Dissenters, out of an equal Abhorrence and Apprehension of Popery, they were also reproach'd with the Name of *Presbyterians*, and Enemies to the Church: The Church it self, all that while, being account-
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ed by the other Division in the State, in a most safe and flourishing Condition ; with a disguised Papist on the Throne, and a profess'd Papist the Heir Presumptive, and amidst all those Stratagems of Popery to destroy both Church and State.

That this Union, which was the first Colour of charging *Presbytery* upon *Churchmen*, was not a Combination against the Church, but a joint Strength against Popery, upon very just Apprehensions of it ; became clear, when it was well nigh too late : When these united Endeavours had prov'd ineffectual, and a Popish Prince on the Throne was not *preparing* us for Destruction, as his Predecessor had been, but was actually destroying us, and openly subverting the whole Constitution.

In that dreadful Extremity, to which Church and State were reduced by the Follies of Men ; it pleased God to send us a most seasonable Deliverance, and to drive Popery to seek for Protection under a neighbouring Monarch. But, notwithstanding all that Experience in former Reigns, no sooner did the same Strength unite under our Glorious Deliverer, to secure the Nation against the Return of Popery, but the same

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Cry of *Presbytery* was renew'd, and the Church was again in the utmost Peril : And it is well remember'd, to what Degree the Authors of those Reproaches perplex'd and obstructed the Endeavours of that great Prince, for the Security of our Liberties and Religion.

The Enemy, however, was disappointed in his main Design, of enslaving us once more to a Popish Prince ; and, in the next Reign, chiefly by the Spirit and Vigour of that joint Strength which had at first united against Popery, he was not only disabled from attempting our Ruin, but by a Course of most wonderful Successes on our Part, was himself reduced to the utmost Extremity. But it is to be observ'd, that as our Victories increas'd, the Danger of the Church increas'd too ; and it was not confess'd to be in perfect Safety, till we were enter'd into Measures, which put an End to our Glorious Successes, and lifted up the Head of the common Enemy, and in a few Years sunk these Nations from the highest Pitch of Glory, to the very Brinks of Ruin and Destruction.

The plain Tendency of this Account, is to show, that for many Reigns we have been engaged in one continued Struggle against Popery, which has been one continued Warning to us to pre-

preserve the strictest Union among our selves ; and that the Assistance which Protestant Dissenters have lent to Churchmen, and their pursuing the same Measures in the State, has not been to bring in *Presbytery*, but to keep out *Popery*. So we find in many other Cases, that Persons and Bodies, who are of very different Sentiments and Interests in all other respects, will readily unite for the common Safety, whenever they are threatned with the same common Danger ; and so it particularly happen'd in the Course of our late Wars, when we saw the strictest Alliance between Protestant and Popish Powers, in Defence of the Liberties of Europe. And the present Face of Affairs Abroad, and that Spirit of Sedition and Discontent which is so visible at Home, are far from being Motives to dissolve or loosen that united Strength, to which we chiefly owe our present happy Establishment ; the great Security, under God, to our Laws, Liberties, and Religion.

But if, notwithstanding all that has been said, the good Wishes and Assistance of Protestant Dissenters to one Division in the State, must needs infer a secret Affection to *Presbytery*, in those who receive them ; the Authors of that Reproach will be oblig'd to find some satisfactory

Rea-

Reason, why they may not as well be charged with a secret Affection to *Popery* and the *Pretender*, under such a full Enjoyment of the good Wishes and Assistance of Papists, Nonjurors, and the Disaffected of all Sorts : With what Views it is, that the whole Body of these Men are such zealous Advocates for one Side, and that their Hopes rise or fall, as the Power and Interest of that Side increases or abates : To what Prospects it must be owing, that a Change in the Publick Administration not many Years since, was so great Matter of Joy to Popery, and of Sorrow, in proportion, to the whole Protestant Interest in Europe.

Much more might be alledg'd upon the same Head, if this were a proper Place for Expostulation. But what I have already said, has been by way of *Defence* only, against a wicked Device to turn all Endeavours against Popery into Enmity against the Church ; and so far am I from a *Desire* to Expostulate in this Case, that I am truly sensible how nearly it concerns the Honour and Interest of the Nation, that all our Divisions and Animosities be forgotten and buried ; and how much it is the Duty of all, and especially of the Ministers of the Gospel, to labour against them, and to study and promote the Things which belong to Peace.

But

But if Interest and Ambition must prevail, and, to support these, Men must be listed, without Distinction of Good or Bad ; If from thence Quarrels and Contentions must arise in the *State*, and these grow into Riots and Tumults : Let not the CHURCH, however, be drawn in, either to give Credit to such Practices, or to bear the Reproach of them ; but let that Sacred Name remain for ever a Name of Religion and Loyalty and Peace. Let the Members of the Church be known by the ancient Tests of real Piety and Goodness, and a devout Attendance on Her Publick Worship : Let all who answer these Characters, account themselves Members of the same Body, and live in Unity and Godly Love, and join heartily in maintaining the Constitution of the Church, and in guarding the Name against the Usurpations of profane and wicked Men, who belong to no Church, but the Synagogue of *Satan*. Finally, Let the Safety of the Church be built upon a Foundation, that is fairly consistent with the Safety of the State ; and, as it stands in many respects Incorporated with the State, let it be the great Example of Duty and Decency to Authority, and the constant Promoter of Peace and Order.

This

This is a truly Christian CHURCH ; such a Church, as Man will reverence, and God will undoubtedly bless and protect.

Now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, be ascribed all Honour, Power, Praise, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, now, henceforth, and for evermore. AMEN.

F I N I S.